

Harry's 550 tour was his second operational tour. He made his first with 101 Squadron, which proved eventful.

Harry was part of Sgt Frank Smith's crew. On return from Dortmund (their 4<sup>th</sup> op), they found Holme-Spalding Moor fogbound. The pilot diverted to Linton-on-Ouse but fog there made it impossible to get down so they headed back to Holme.

A lone searchlight from an army AA unit was mistaken for the airfield's beacon. ED830 attempted to land on the bearing but ran through power cables and trees, crashing.

Harry was rescued from the wreckage unconscious and suffering from a severe back injury. It was 6 weeks before he was fit enough to return to operations with his crew.

Frank Smith, now a Pilot Officer, and the rest of the crew ended their 30 op tour on the 31.8.43, taking W4993 against Berlin.

Harry did his remaining 15 ops as a 'spare', flying with 9 different crews. The last was a daunting trip against Berlin on the 2.12.43, during the air battle on the city, in DV308 with the Squadron C.O, W/C Carey-Foster.

For his 550 tour, he was crewed up with F/L Newitt, another ex 101 Squadron member. The rest of the crew - F/O Johnny Wright, F/O Bill Williams, W/O Billy Hill, F/O Levene and F/Sgt John Piper.

He completed over 341 hours of operational combat time during his 50 trips, flew with 12 different crews and went against targets in 24 different Lancasters.

I tracked Harry down and found him residing in the comfortable, wardened home for ex RAF Wexford House in Melton Mowbray. He has just turned 90 in the April of 2011.

Still a great conversationalist, Harry offers an opinion on the RAF in the Second World War through to modern politics, events and life in general!

Regarding his operation time, in his own words - 43's tour was difficult, all night ops, their (the Germans) defences were good, it was attrition. Going against targets in their cities..., the gunner was taught not to look down over target, danger of loss of night vision. You were supposed to scan the sky looking for the danger of an attacking fighter. Berlin, Hamburg, Nuremberg..., sometimes it was easier not to look down. Some things stay with you. This was the air war.

The crew shot from 550 captures Harry quick relaxed and laughing - not much has changed 67 years on!

Jim Cameron 18.5.11